

Reading Performance of Grade 2 Pupils: Basis for Reading Camp

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Abstract:

Reading is a skill and ultimately the foundation for success. In the Philippine educational system, early grade reading performance has been a concern. In addition, in the local level, there is a scarcity of empirical research conducted specifically to study the reading performance of grade 2 pupils and utilize this as a basis for developing a structured intervention program such as a reading camp. This study investigated the effectiveness of a Reading Camp intervention in improving the reading performance of Grade 2 pupils and proposed a viable extension literacy program for sustainability. In the one-group pretest–post-test design, reading competencies of the pupils were measured before and after the implementation of the reading camp. Results showed a significant enhancement, where mean scores increased from 4.42 (SD = 1.57) to 25.95 (SD = 3.12), which indicates improvement in foundational reading competencies. Participants showed consistent gains in terms of performance. Further, in a paired samples t-test, the pretest and post-test scores were found to be significantly different; this thus means a highly significant intervention effect was yielded: mean difference = -21.53, $t(18) = -28.53$, $p < .05$. Results affirm research stressing the importance of systematic early literacy interventions in preventing long-term problems in reading. Using the findings, a replicable extension program entitled Reading C.A.M.P. was created: Creative Adventure, Mastering Phonics and Reading. The intervention packages daily teacher-guided reading, differentiated instruction, and periodic progress monitoring, serving as an evidence-based and sustainable solution to enhance early-grade literacy as a means to further quality education.

Keywords: Grade 2 pupils, Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), reading, reading performance.

Introduction

Reading is a basic skill and ultimately the foundation for success. Reading is a fundamental skill upon which all other knowledge and academic success depend, particularly in early formal education. Students in Grade 2

ought to manifest enhanced fluency and comprehension in reading as they move from the acquisition of basic reading skills to the acquisition of knowledge through the utilization of the skill. Research consistently shows that pupils who fail to develop foundational reading skills at this stage are more likely to experience continued academic difficulties in later grades, making early literacy development a critical priority in basic education (Hulme, et.al, 2020).

At the global level, various studies carried out between 2020 and 2025 have identified that the learning crisis in early literacy persists. Reports by global institutions have identified that globally, a large number of children fail to read and understand their school level texts despite attending school for many years, especially in low-and middle-income countries (World Bank, 2022). Furthermore, the effects of the recent global shutdown of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic have also resulted in a further learning crisis in early literacy, as many children were unable to learn to read because of the shutdown of schools (UNICEF, 2021). However, despite all the global practices and strategies implemented to improve literacy levels across the world, studies have identified the lack of appropriate teaching of early literacy, the lack of access to targeted interventions, and the ineffective use of school-level reading results to design appropriate interventions (UNESCO, 2023).

In the context of the Philippine educational system, early grade reading performance has been a concern. Studies and review of data from various national and regional assessment tools showed that Filipino learners have poorer performance in basic reading skills, particularly in decoding, fluency, and comprehension, starting from Grade 1 to Grade 3 (Department of Education [DepEd], 2022). Moreover, data from the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) assessment tool showed that a wider portion of Filipino learners failed to meet minimum proficiency levels in reading, especially when compared to their regional peers, which highlights areas of concern in the foundation and development of their literacy skills (SEA-PLM Secretariat, 2024). Although various programs and initiatives from the Department of Education were implemented to address early grade reading, it has been highlighted in more recent studies that gaps exist, particularly at the school level, in relation to learners' actual reading skills.

In addition, in the local level, there is a scarcity of empirical research conducted specifically to study the reading performance of grade 2 pupils and utilize this as a basis for developing a structured intervention program such as a reading camp. Clearly, there is a need to conduct localized research using actual data to determine the reading performance of the pupils. It is imperative to study the reading performance of grade 2 pupils in Capas Integrated School in order to address a learning gap as the students further progress to grade levels in which issues in reading may become more magnified.

This study was designed to: (1) determine the reading performance of the grade 2 pupils before and after the reading camp; (2) determine the significant difference in the performance of grade 2 pupils before and after the reading camp, and; craft a sustainable extension activity can be recommended.

The importance of the research relies on the possible contribution it can make to the varied stakeholders in the education sector. For the students themselves, the findings can give rise to the establishment of a 'Reading Camp' that can resolve particular problems related to reading fluency, comprehension, and consequently academic performance. For the teaching staff and other administrators of the respective schools, it can be the basis upon which appropriate strategies can be formulated for the students. For the parents and the entire community, not to forget, it can create greater awareness of the students' reading problems, hence enhancing the community's role as the second educator.

In addition, findings may be useful to educating educational administrators and planners in the effectiveness of improving early literacy programs. Finally, the present study contributes to the extensiveness of educational research by responding to current shortages in localized educational research regarding early grade reading student performance and intervention-based programs in the Philippine elementary education system.

2. Methodology

The present study employed a quantitative study design, a one-group pretest and posttest design. Generally, quasi-experimental study design was applicable in an educational setting in which it was not possible to randomly assign subjects, but the researcher made an attempt at establishing the effects of a study by comparing data before and after a specific intervention using matched subjects (Creswell and Creswell, 2023). In this context, the basic research purpose of this study was, in fact, to evaluate or verify if the subjects, i.e., Grade 2 pupils, were able to read before and after participating in a Reading Camp, and if so, if these changes were statistically significant or not.

To this end, purposive sampling was employed, recruited from Grade 2 pupils identified as falling behind their literacy peers based on in-class reading level assessments and teacher recommendations. The latter sampling method was deemed suitable for intervention-based educational psychology research, especially when interventions sought to help particular groups of learners who had been part of various educational or literacy intervention programs, since purposive sampling is normally used in research where targeted participants are chosen (Creswell and Creswell, 2021). Pre-testing took place before engaging in the Reading Camp and was followed by a post-test, which helped evaluate whether there was any noticeable enhancement

in the level of reading ability of pupils. The approach taken, whereby a pre-test and a post-test were conducted, provided a means of objectively assessing the improvements gained as a result of the intervention, with this being supported under educational psychology-based interventions, as highlighted in educational works by Slavin (2020). Overall, this approach was effective in providing systematic means of data collection, which informed this paper.

The respondents of this particular study were the Grade 2 pupils currently officially enrolled in their school year 2025-2026 in Capas Integrated School. In this study, total enumeration was used. However, the pupils that were absent during the entire process of this study were not included in this particular investigation as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents of the Study

Respondents	Boys	Girls	Total
Grade 2 Pupils	13	6	19

As for the measurement tool that was employed in this study, the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) was used, which is an assessment tool used to assess reading proficiency skills such as word recognition, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension, in line with DepEd standards (DepEd, 2024). Before the implementation of the intervention for its usage in the research part of the study, the school principal was asked for the permission regarding the implementation of the study in the school, and prior to the implementation of the research, permits from the parents or guardians of the students included in the research part of the study had been secured for the implementation of the research, together with the orientation of the teachers or facilitators of the classroom for the standard research implementation approach for the utilization of the instrument Phil IRI.

The pre-test was conducted to assess the prior reading skill level for grade 2 students, and the students who performed poorly during the pre-test were selected for the Reading Camp program. The Reading Camp program lasted for four weeks, with the students participating once a week for three hours per session. The students were invited to the Reading Camp program to ensure that they were exposed to the activities the instructor needs to provide them with.

The reading skills acquired at the camp involved basic reading skills like phonics awareness, word identification, fluency, and reading comprehension. The participants were divided into groups based on their level of reading competency, and different learning strategies such as guided reading, shared reading, vocabulary exercises, leveled books, and visuals were employed in teaching literacy. It has been established that strategic shared reading and literacy intervention programs are effective in helping children

develop vocabularies, fluency, and literacy skills (Cipolletti et al., 2025). Some of the reading skills learnt by the pupils in the teaching of reading skills are

After participating in the Reading Camp, the Phil IRI was used as a posttest to assess the gains in the reading ability of the children. Both the pre-test and the posttest approach of the intervention activities enabled an objective assessment of the effectiveness of the Reading Camp on the proficiency of the children in the subject of reading. The results enabled the estimation of the extent of the gain made by the children and assisted in planning a reading program for future class one children.

The data gathered shall then be analyzed by applying a series of procedures for quantitative data analysis. Such data as the means and the frequency shall be generated to be utilized in the analysis of the pupils' reading abilities before and after undergoing a Reading Camp.

The reading performance of Grade 2 pupils before and after the reading camp was measured using the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil IRI). The accuracy and comprehension of pupils' oral reading were examined and classified following the levels designated by the results of the learner assessment in the DepED-aligned Phil IRI, as presented in Table 2. The descriptive results, including percentages, were maintained to ascertain the reading performance of the pupils before the reading camp.

Table 2. DepEd Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) Levels and Criteria

Reading Level	Comprehension Score	Interpretation
Independent	80–100%	Pupil can read and understand text without assistance
Instructional	59–79%	Pupil can read with teacher guidance
Frustration	58% and below	Pupil struggles; text is too difficult

Based on DM no. 317 s. 2024

In order to prove the statistical significance of the variations noted in the scores of the pre-test and post-test parameters, a paired sample t-test shall be used. This particular test shall work best in comparing two means from related groups of data, which will then help the researchers assess the influence of the Reading Camp with regards to the pupils' ability to read. Determining the recommendations for the long-term reading improvement initiative shall then be based on the results of the analysis.

3. Results

Reading Performance of the Grade 2 Pupils Before and after the Reading Camp

The findings in Table 3 show tremendous improvement in the reading performance of the Grade 2 pupils after the intervention in the reading camp. The pretest mean score stood at 4.42 with an SD of 1.57, indicating that initially, pupils were of low reading proficiency and thus had poorly acquired foundational reading skills prior to the intervention and in the frustration level. In contrast, the posttest mean score increased significantly to 25.95 with an SD of 3.12, indicating a real improvement in reading performance following the intervention and the participants were in instructional level. This huge increase in mean scores provides firm indications that the reading camp really helped boost pupils' reading abilities. The relatively low standard deviations during both testing periods further support the fact that improvement cuts across nearly all participants rather than being lodged in a few high-scoring pupils.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Reading Scores of Grades 2 Pupils

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Score	2	7	4.42	1.575
Post-test Score	22	33	25.95	3.118

Significant Difference in the Performance of Grade 2 Pupils Before and After the Reading Camp

Similarly, the results for the paired samples t-test, as presented in Table 4, again confirmed the effectiveness of the reading camp intervention in improving the effectiveness for the Grade 2 pupils. The value, as calculated, for the pretest and posttest, in this case, was -21.53, which clearly indicated the significant improvement in the reading ability of the learners.

Table 4. Significant Difference in the Performance of Grade 2 pupils Before and After the Reading Camp

	Mean Difference	t-value	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Paired sample t-test	-21.53	-28.53	18	.000

Similarly, the t-value for conducting the significance test, as calculated for the 18 degrees, came out to be -28.53, which clearly indicated that the error had decreased to .000, lower than the specified 0.05. The t-value clearly

indicated the extraordinary effectiveness level, signifying that the intervention program had a significant impact on the specific reading abilities.

These results are in accordance with the recent empirical studies conducted from 2020 to 2025, which stress the importance of structured reading interventions in showing statistically significant improvement when a pretest – posttest research design is used.

4. Discussion

Following Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) specifications, pupils in the pretest reading achievement were found to be at Frustration Level, where there was heavy difficulty in reading. When pupils passed through the Reading Camp, their level improved to Instructional Level, where pupils could now read with some guidance. This, in fact, proved that the intervention was effective, enabling pupils to progress from their level of difficulty to their level of reading.

These findings are strongly corroborated in recent studies conducted between 2020 and 2025 that have, in fact, stressed the importance of effective interventions in structured reading. Slavin et al. (2020) have also established that the implementation of systematic and explicit reading instruction among primary learners proves effective in ensuring improvements in their reading outcome. Notedly, this improvement can always be realized among those who begin with poor literacy skills in their learning process. Similarly, Dietrichson et al. (2021) have conducted a significant large-scale meta-analysis intended to determine the effects of early reading interventions on pupils' reading outcome, as it was established that early intervention has significant effects on pupils' decoding, fluency, and reading comprehension skills. In more recent intervention-based classroom settings in the context of developing countries, it was established that improvements in pre-posttest patterns, as identified in this study, are common in implementing reading interventions in classrooms.

The implications of these results are noteworthy, especially with regards to instructional strategy and planning in education. First, these results reiterate the significance of early reading interventions, particularly in improving reading skills in the Grade 2 students, as it could help alleviate literacy issues in the long run and ensure academic success. Second, the success of the reading camp indicates that it is critical for schools to promote reading programs, especially among students diagnosed with reading difficulties. Indeed, international educational recommendations for improving learning outcomes emphasize the role of early reading as one of the strategies most critical to improving academic success, as recommended by the OECD in their recent reports on the state of education in the world (OECD, 2021; OECD, 2023). Again, the results here provide reliable and verifiable evidence

from the years 2020 to 2025 supporting the veracity that students could greatly improve their reading skills through early reading interventions.

There was a marked in terms of the significant difference in the reading performance of the grade 2 learners before and after the reading camp. According to Slavin et al. (2020), significant differences in reading outcomes were observed prior to, and following, the implementation of an early reading program based on explicit instruction.

A meta-analysis by Dietrichson et al. (2021) has also provided evidence that intensive reading interventions result in substantial and statistically significant effects on the literacy performance of young learners and less successful readers. In addition to this, a number of current school-based studies have now reported significant t-test results after reading prevention programs, confirming that focused literacy interventions result in measurable improvements in students' reading performance (Wanzek et al., 2018).

The implications of these statistically significant results are important for both classroom practice and educational decision making. First, these findings provide strong empirical support for the implementation of a reading camp or a similar intervention program as an effective strategy in improving early literacy skills. Secondly, this significant improvement underlines the value of the employment of evidence-based instructional approaches, combined with continuous assessment, to gauge the progress of the learner. Lastly, the results are consistent with international education reports that advocate early, data-driven interventions to address learning deficiencies and improve foundational skills (OECD 2021; OECD 2023). By and large, the statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest scores supports the finding that Reading Camp was very effective in raising the reading performance of Grade 2 students.

The activity places emphasis on daily teacher-led guided reading, focusing on phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Teacher-led reading intervention is considered to be one of the most effective methods for improving literacy achievements of early-grade pupils, especially when the intervention targets pupils who started with low reading performance (Dietrichson et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021). By use of direct instructional techniques, the teacher can give immediate feedback and see the improvement of the learner. Learning difficulties can be addressed in these learners by giving learning assistance through direct instruction, and this can help in achieving major improvements in reading comprehension (Laurent-Prophete et al., 2024).

Additionally, the program incorporates leveled reading materials with a number of comprehension exercises for the learners, which aids in tailoring the reading approaches for the learners based on their reading skills. Research has indicated that differentiated methods using the teacher have a greater impact on the learners, especially struggling readers, in comparison

with standard methods in enhancing reading skills (Dietrichson et al., 2021). Reading logs and monthly tests for the learners have been included to enable the teacher to offer additional assistance for weak readers, thereby catering for developmental reading skills for the learners based on scientific research (UNESCO, 2022).

From the perspective of sustainability, the activity facilitated by the teacher within the school ensures that the activity can be sustained regularly without the school heavily investing in other resources. This makes the approach sustainable, as quality reading becomes part of the school culture. On the other hand, the activity above aids in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goal 4, which focuses on the provision of quality education while promoting the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal 17, as the activity above encourages inter-partnership between the teachers, schools, and parents to promote the reading ability of the children (OECD, 2023a). Reading C.A.M.P. above, therefore, provides a sustainable approach to improving and maintaining the reading performance among the children in Grade 2, as the activity above makes the children read in a fun and interesting way.

5. Conclusion

The conclusions were drawn based from the gathered and interpreted data. The conclusions are as follows: The reading performance of grade 2 learners were particularly very poor during the pre-reading camp stage, thereby necessitating the need for the reading camp initiative in order to improve these skills through literacy support. Moreover, the impact of the intervention activity was a major improvement in reading ability for the pupils, as seen in the posttest results, as the pupils' results were significantly high. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference in the data was found between the pretest and posttest reading test results among Grades 2 students in validating the efficacy of the reading camp. Lastly, organized and teacher-run reading programs are known to be the best means of addressing reading problems in the early stage as well as promoting literacy skills in early grades.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author of this study declares that there are no conflicts of interest in the conduct and publication of this study. The author of this study does not have any financial relations or interests, such as employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, or paid expert testimony, and does not have any patent applications that may have influenced the study.

Additionally, the author of this study declares that there are no non-financial conflicts of interest. The author does not have any personal relations, professional affiliations, or any interests that may be deemed to have influenced the study.

This declaration of conflict of interest is done for the purpose of ensuring that the study maintains its integrity.

Ethical Approval

This research was conducted in accordance with the code of ethics concerning human subject research. Before the research data were collected, the researcher sought the approval of the relevant school authorities to conduct the research. Informed consent of the parents or legal guardians of the pupils was sought before the research, while the assent of the learners was sought wherever possible. Participation in the research was voluntary, and the confidentiality and anonymity of all the subjects were guaranteed.

Data availability

Datasets used and/or analyzed for the present study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request. Availability of the data is restricted in order to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of research participants.

Abbreviation

The abbreviations to be used in this manuscript are the following:

- DepEd – Department of Education
- Phil-IRI – Philippine Informal Reading Inventory
- SD – Standard Deviation
- N – Number of Participants (Sample Size)

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